

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5908

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5524

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS MY SN

SUBJECT: VISIT TO KUALA LUMPUR OF SINGAPORE DEFENSE MINISTER

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4929

1. SUMMARY: SINGAPORE DEP PRIMIN/DEFMIN DR. GOH KENG SWEE MADE 27 HOUR VISIT KUALA LUMPUR DECEMBER 12-13 FOR MEETINGS WITH MALAYSIAN PRIMIN RAZAK, DEP PRIMIN/TRADE MIN HUSSEIN ONN, AND DEFMIN HAMZAH. VISIT CHARACTERIZED PUBLICALLY AND PRIVATELY AS GREAT SUCCESS: SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT TWICE YEARLY MINISTERIAL TALKS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS (GOH INVITED DATUK HUSSEIN VISIT SINGAPORE EARLY NEXT YEAR), ARRANGEMENTS FOR MORE NUMEROUS WORKING LEVEL CONSULTATIONS ON JOINT ECONOMIC PROJECTS, INCREASED EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES, AND MUTUAL RELAXATION OF TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. SINGAPORE DEP PRIMIN/DEFMIN DR. GOH VISITED MALAYSIA DECEMBER 12-13 AT INVITATION GOM DEP PRIMIN/TRADE MIN FOR QUOTE DISCUSSION OF CLOSER ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND OTHER MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST UNQUOTE. GOH'S SCHEDULE INCLUDED CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETING AND LUNCH WITH PRIMIN RAZAK, CALL ON DEFMIN AND

INSPECTION MILITARY HONOR GUARD, DINNER WITH DEP PRIMIN HUSSEIN ONN, AND VISIT FOLLOWING MORNING TO FELDA LAND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME. AMONG THOSE PARTICIPATING IN WORKING TALKS WERE HUSSEIN ONN, DIRGEN PRIMIN'S PLANNING UNIT RAMA IYER, MFA'S RAZALI ISMAIL, GOM HICOM SINGAPORE ABDULLAH ALI, GOS HICOM K.L. DR. WEE, AND OTHERS. GOM SPOKESMAN DESCRIBED VISIT AS HAVING GONE QUOTE WELL UNQUOTE BUT NO DETAILS OF AGENDA OR SUBSTANCE MADE PUBLIC TO DATE. HOWEVER, DR. GOH DID ANNOUNCE INVITATION FOR HUSSEIN ONN VISIT TO SINGAPORE EARLY NEXT YEAR.

3. ACCORDING RELIABLE LOCAL SOURCES INCLUDING SINGAPORE DEP HICOM, VISIT WENT REMARKABLY SMOOTHLY AND WAS EVEN MORE CORDIAL THAN PRIMIN RAZAK'S SINGAPORE VISIT NOV 13-14 WHICH OPENED NEW DIALOGUE BETWEEN QUARRELING SISTER COUNTRIES AND HAS LED TO ESTABLISHMENT JOINT SECURITY LIAISON EFFORT. IN LATEST TALKS, LIAISON EXTENDED TO PROBLEMS MUTUAL ECONOMIC INTEREST INCLUDING CURRENT REQUEST BY OIL COMPANIES INCREASE FUEL PRICES, SINGAPOREAN INVESTMENT IN MALAYSIAN-APPROVED PROJECTS OF MUTUAL BENEFIT IN JOHORE, RELAXATION OF BORDER CROSSING REQUIREMENTS FOR CITIZENS BOTH COUNTRIES, AND INTENSIFIED EXCHANGES OF STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES. ONE PARTICIPANT SAID GOM AND GOS OFFICIALS RECOGNIZED THAT VIRTUALLY ALL INVOLVED IN TALKS HAD COMMON EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS WHICH SERVED TO BIND THEM TOGETHER IN OUTLOOK AND EXPECTATIONS, THEREFORE INCREASED UNIVERSITY CONTACTS DESIRABLE TO PROMOTE CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP. ECONOMIC COORDINATION WILL INCLUDE AT LEAST TWICE YEARLY TALKS AT DEP PRIMIN LEVEL AND CONTINUING, FREQUENT WORKING LEVEL CONSULTATIONS ON BILATERAL MATTERS.

4. COMMENT: PROGRESS IN PATCHING UP BAD RELATIONS BETWEEN GOM-GOS LEADERSHIP IS POSITIVE STEP TOWARD ELIMINATION OF A HOST OF PETTY AND NO-SO-PETTY SQUABBLES WHICH HAVE IMPEDED NECESSARY COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WHOSE ECONOMIES AND INTERESTS CONTINUE OVERLAP EXTENSIVELY. (FYI MEMBER PRIMIN RAZAK'S SECRETARIAT OPINED THAT MAJOR FACTOR IN KEEPING POT BOILING IN PAST WAS GOM FINANCE MIN TAN SIEW SIN WHO HEARTILY DISLIKES DR GOH--THEY ARE COUSINS--AND WHO TOOK UNNECESSARILY PRECIPITATE ACTION TO, FOR EXAMPLE, UNTIE MALAYSIA FROM SINGAPORE DOLLAR WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING TO GOS AND OVER OBJECTIONS GOM OFFICIALS SUCH AS BANK NEGARA GOVERNOR TAN SRI DR. ISMAIL. ALTHOUGH CURRENTLY AILING TUN TAN PLAYED

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ROLE IN EARLIER VISIT BY RAZAK TO SINGAPORE, HE APPARENTLY TOOK NO PART IN CONSULTATIONS WITH DR. GOH. IN RECENT FAREWELL CALL, PRIMIN TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT TAN IS ILL AND MAY SOON RESIGN FROM GOVT AND MCA.)

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